**English Language Arts**   
***Common Core – Text Complexity***

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| Slide # | **Talking Points** |
| 1 | Introduce ourselves |
| 2 | Share session goals  Overview of Agenda |
| 3 |  |
| 4 | Originally, there were six Common Core Instructional Shifts. The state of North Carolina has now consolidated and integrated those six shifts into three shifts. Ask participants to analyze the changes. |
| 5 | The content of the six shifts is integrated into three and nothing is eliminated. And, three shifts are easier to remember than 6. This table shows the integration of the 6 shifts into 3.  This year, there is a strong focus on Shift 2: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text. The writers of the CCSS emphasized this particular shift because they know this is the one that may be the most difficult for some teachers as well as having access to resources and developing assessments aligned to this shift.  What does it mean for us? Online resources and additional professional development will have this slant. |
| 6 | **Shift 1: Building Knowledge through Content-Rich Nonfiction and Informational Text**  Students in grades K – 5 read a balance of informational and literary texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students access the world – science, social studies, the arts and literature – through text. At least 50% of what students read is informational.  Likewise, in grades 6-12, content area teachers outside of the ELA classroom share the responsibility of embedding literacy into content instruction using informational texts.  Teachers, rather than referring to the texts, should allow students the opportunity to learn from what they read.  Teaching literacy is now an equally shared responsibility across disciplines which is why other content areas in addition to ELA were asked to attend today**.** |  |
| 7 | Teachers ensure that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to text.  Students have rich and rigorous conversations which are dependent on a common text.  Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making arguments both in conversation, as well as in writing to assess comprehension of a text.  **Writing needs to emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument.**  **Shift 2: Reading and Writing Grounded in Evidence from Texts**  This is the year of evidence!  Students should have opportunities to engage in rich and rigorous discussions which are dependent on a common text. Teachers insist that learning stays deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making arguments based on evidence both in conversation and writing to assess comprehension of a text.  Use of evidence is threaded throughout the Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Strands. |  |
| 8 | **Shift 3: Regular Practice with Complex Texts and Its Academic Vocabulary**  Depth vs. Breadth  In order to prepare students for the complexity of texts at the college and career level, each grade level requires a “step” of growth on the “staircase” of complexity.  Teachers provide scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for all students to access complex texts. The emphasis is on exposing ALL students to complex texts and not simply covering a reading list.  There is also a focus on Tier 2 words that may inhibit comprehension and fluency across disciplines.  By focusing strategically on general academic terms (Tier II Words) and less on domain specific terms, teachers build students’ ability to access more complex texts across disciplines. (Refer to page 33 in Appendix A)  Teachers provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for students reading below grade level to access the text.  By focusing strategically on comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words and less on esoteric literary terms, teachers constantly build students’ ability to access more complex texts across the content areas. |  |
| 9 | We are going to play a quick game of Myth Busters. The goal here is to **demonstrate** an engaging way to build a common and accurate understanding of the Common Core.  Has anyone seen this show before? The premise is… I’ll put up an idea, and you will use your card to show if the statement on the screen is a myth or a fact. |  |
| 10 | From *Harvard Educational Review*.  While the content of the sets of standards may be similar (crosswalks) the level of knowledge and skills the CCSS call for is quite different from what current standards expect and what schools currently practice.  And, the Common Core State Standards have the same anchor standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language, K-12.  We can clearly articulate vertical alignment with the Common Core State Standards. |  |
| 11 | From *Harvard Educational Review* article:  Standards by themselves do not improve education. Districts and schools will have to make instructional shifts and implement the Standards with fidelity. This will require  Advocates have high hopes…yet even the most passionate advocate will acknowledge that standards, by themselves, do not improve education. To have an effect on the day to day interaction between students and teachers (thus improving learning), states and districts will have to implement the standards with fidelity.  This will require changes to curricula and assessment to align with the standards, professional development to ensure that teachers know what they are expected to teach, and ultimately changes in teacher education so that all teachers have the capability to teach all students the standards. |  |
| 12 | Because the ELA classroom must focus on literature that includes stories, drama, and poetry, as well as, literary nonfiction, a great deal of informational reading must take place in other classes. The Standards require that a great deal of reading informational texts takes place in and outside the ELA classroom. It is a shared responsibility across disciplines.  **Refer to page 5 in the Common Core** – based on the evaluation of NAEP assessments administered in 12th grade, 30% of the passages are literary and 70% are informational. This data precipitated the shift to an emphasis on informational texts. And, the percentages in the NAEP table on page 5 in the introduction of the CCSS reflect the SUM of student reading, not just reading in ELA classrooms. |  |
| 13 | Text exemplars are a guide for what students should be reading at a particular grade level. It is not a required reading list.  In Appendix B, the text exemplars are supplemented by performance tasks that help clarify the meaning of the Standards.  Reading lists are school and district based decisions. |  |
| 14 | Accelerated Reader is a quantitative tool and does not take into consideration all the parts of text complexity.  We must equally consider qualitative, reader and task measures. |  |
| 15 | The Common Core State Standards is not an exhaustive list but defines what is most essential.  While the standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught.  It is a district decision as to when or if you teach cursive writing. (Refer to page 6, Common Core) |  |
| 16 | Right now, we want to give you an opportunity to discuss text complexity. Talk at your tables about questions and concerns for Halifax County Schools about how you are addressing text complexity. Take about five minutes and we will debrief.  Whole group share out….  Today, we are going to take you through a process for evaluating the text complexity that has been developed by a multi state consortium of ELA teacher leaders to help schools and districts gain a better understanding of text complexity. And – using text complexity measures to match books to readers. |  |
| 17 | We are going to watch a video created by the New York City Department of Education that provides us with an overview of Text Complexity. This video is a review of the three parts of Text Complexity. |  |
| 18 | Now that we are all using the same terminology and understanding around text complexity, let’s look at how we measure the complexity of a text.  In order to provide you a model, we are going to walk you through the process that we used to determine text complexity for the novel The Book Thief.  We are going to take you through the process step by step… and then, you will work together in grade span groups to practice analyzing a text.  This process is the same for both literary and informational texts. |  |
| 19 | This is how you will identify the quantitative measure for text complexity.  We will we use the Lexile Framework for Reading.  If you have a computer, access the following site: www.lexile.com This site is a very helpful website…. Note the arrow on the screen. You can type in the title or author to find the Lexile measure of a text. It also has a Lexile analyzer for texts that are not in the bank of Lexiled texts. (i.e. newspaper articles, short stories)  Again, we will be using *The* *Book Thief to* model the process for measuring Text Complexity. Type in The Book Thief and see what the current lexile level is for the book.  When we looked up the Lexile score for *The Book Thief*, it had a Lexile level of 730. |
| 20 | Once we have identified the Lexile score, refer to the Lexile ranges on the left side of the table…. Then, determine the grade band range associated with the Lexile number on the right hand side of the table.  **Let’s do this for the *Book Thief*** – the Lexile measure is 730L – What is the Grade Band assigned to this text? (answer is 2-3)  That is all that we have to do to determine the quantitative measure.  This is where we have often stopped – now we are asked to go further to analyze the qualitative features of the text and apply them to our readers and the tasks we assign. |
| 21 |  |
| 22 |  |
| 23 |  |
| 24 | There are 4 features to consider when determining the qualitative measure of a text:   1. **Levels of meaning** – single levels of meaning are easier to read (less complex) than multiple levels of meaning that may include satires or irony. 2. **Structure** – Think about how the text is organized. Does it have clearly marked text features that help the reader? Consider things like chronological order – is the text presented in chronological order or are the events presented out of sequence? More complex texts may include flashbacks and foreshadowing. 3. **Language conventionality and clarity** – easier texts have contemporary, clear language while more complex use figurative, ironic language. Think about the **vocabulary** the author chose – is it conversational or more academic or archaic? 4. **Knowledge demands** – Does the author make assumptions about what the reader knows? Texts that make few assumptions about readers’ background knowledge are easier than those that make many assumptions about the reader.   *Three kinds of knowledge demands to think about* – life experiences, cultural/literary, and content/discipline specific.  Pages 5 and 6 in Appendix A are very helpful and give examples of each of the 4 areas which make up the qualitative measure of the text.  **Hand out the bookmark.** |
| 25 | So here is an example of our annotations for The Book Thief to help determine the qualitative measure. Notice where we highlighted and we made the annotations.  Take a moment to read over the text and the annotations. As you read, pay close attention to levels of meaning, text structure, language, and knowledge demands.  **Share out.** What features in the text might be challenging for some students? |
| 26 | Here are some of the characteristics of the book that students might find challenging.  **So now let’s apply our findings to a rubric…..** |
| 27 |  |
| 28 |  |
| 29 | Refer to the completed rubric, *The Book Thief,* on the back side of the annotations handout.  The next step to the qualitative measure is to apply our thinking to a rubric. |
| 30 | Note that the rubric evaluates the 4 features we analyzed when reading an excerpt from *The Book Thief and* the annotations made.  This rubric gives you a framework for thinking the same about every text you analyze and provides more consistency for teachers. Take a moment and look it over.  What do I do if my X’s are all over the page? Look at the descriptors word for word on the rubric.  You may want to choose a different portion of text if the X’s are all over the place. |
| 31 | You can see how we took the annotations from *The Book Thief and* matched them to the rubric.  Once you have read the text carefully, use your annotations to make informed decisions on the rubric. |
| 32 | The third part of the triangle balances the perspective of text complexity by bringing the reader into the measure as well as the task you plan to assign to teach and assess a standard. |
| 33 | So far, we’ve identified the quantitative measure and analyzed the qualitative measure using the rubric.  It is important to note that the Common Core State Standards clearly state that ALL students have access to complex texts. It is a matter of equity.  As a teacher, I must determine what instructional supports my inexperienced readers may need.  And, I must consider the task and how to scaffold instruction.  Give examples from the Book Thief – need to CONSIDER figurative language, personification of Death, and length of text 552 pages. |
| 34 | Teachers need to choose their texts purposefully. First and foremost… What do I want my students to know and be able to do? Then I choose the text that has the content to teach the standards.  The text is ultimately the vehicle to teach the standard. It is not about teaching a list of novels.  **Read:** what supports do I need……It is important to note that the Common Core State Standards clearly state that ALL students have access to complex texts. It is a matter of equity.  As a teacher, I must determine what instructional supports my inexperienced readers may need. And, I must consider the task and how to scaffold instruction.  One way to provide access to complex texts is through differentiating questions and tasks based upon needs of readers. |
| 35 | We have just reviewed the three parts of the triangle. It is important to consider each part, and not in isolation.  Lexile measures alone are no longer enough to match students to texts. For instance, The Grapes of Wrath falls into the Grade 2-3 Grade Span, yet it is placed in the 9-10 grade band after considering all the components of Text Complexity. |
| 36 | So what do we do with all of this information? We make an appropriate placement of the text.  We need to gather this information to ensure that we are finding the appropriate placement for texts so that we can match books of appropriate complexity for students in our classroom. |
| 37 | **Refer to the handout of the blank placemat.**  The placemat is a graphic organizer to determine placement. This is where we record all the information we collected about the quantitative, qualitative, reader and task measures to determine the Text Complexity of a text.  Note correlation with the color scheme and the three parts of the triangle on the placemat. |
| 38 | Let’s take a look at *The Book Thief* example.  Most of the information has been placed on the “mat” except for 2 important pieces.  **First,** the Major Instructional Areas of Focus has not been filled in. Let’s add those now and practice using the **shorthand document.**   * + **R.2 –** central ideas/themes/summary   + **R.4 –** vocabulary/word choice   + **R.6 –** point of view/purpose   + **L.3 –** style/effective language choices   + **L.5 –** figurative language/word relationships   + **SL.3 -** point of view   **Second,** the Recommended Complexity band has not been decided.  Now it’s time to make a final decision.  Take a moment and re-read the placemat information at your table and make a recommendation. Place that grade band under the title and author at the top left corner of the graphic organizer.  9-10 is the answer. (grade band)  **Share out.** Why didn’t we place *The Book Thief* in the grade 2-3 text complexity band?  Emphasize the BALANCE of all three measures and not using any ONE is isolation to make a **placement**.  **The purpose of this process is to choose complex texts based upon the standards your students need.** |
| 39 | Let’s talk about why this process is important…Take about five minutes to discuss how you might use these tools to determine text complexity.  Why would a teacher need this information or need to go through this process? |
| 40 | This is a quote from a NC teacher. Take a moment to read the quote.  Some teachers might be tempted to make a book “fit” a particular grade. Let’s talk about this? |
| 41 | After the break, you will continue working in groups. |
| 42 | Choose a text to read at your table.  Go step by step with your table group using the guide and the model we provided.  Ask participants to **pull up the guide for analyzing text complexity** to begin.  Direct to read text, annotate, and review the rubric and placemat as a group. |
| 43 | As a group…go through the process. Pick one of the texts at your table to complete a placemat.  Consultants need to be at tables helping answer questions/guide.  **Jigsaw texts for each table** |
| 44 | Ask them to take two sticky notes to add comments to placemats. |
| 45 |  |
| 46 |  |
| 47 | Questions |